



Kriya Yoga Sadhana Tattwa
(The Essence of Kriya Yoga)

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written in Jagannath - Puri, Orissa, India,
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Paramahansa Hariharananda in the 1940's

Chapter 8 – Yogavatara Shyamacharan

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For the spiritual elevation of all humanity, Shyamacharan preached the technique of Kriya Yoga under the guidance and inspiration of Babaji Maharaj. He initiated many householders as well as renunciates into this divine path.

Swami Shriyukteshwar Giri, the noted disciple of Shri Shyamacharan, established the Karar Ashram in Puri. Due to the sole inspiration and blessings of Babaji Maharaj and Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya, Kriya Yoga spread to all parts of the world. Paramahansa Yogananda, the great and main disciple of Shriyukteshwarji has shared Kriya Yoga, the priceless treasure-trove of the East, among many people in the world. It is a matter of great pride that from this place in Puri, Shriyukteshwarji inspired Paramahansa Yogananda to spread Kriya Yoga worldwide. After being initiated into Kriya Yoga by Shriyukteshwarji and Paramahansa Yogananda, both divine yogis directed me in their own way to spread Kriya Yoga not only in Orissa, but also in India and abroad. To fulfil this divine will, Shriyukteshwarji took pledge from me to stay in Karar Ashram. During his lifetime, Paramahansa Yogananda authorized me to spread Kriya Yoga in India as *acharya* and bestowed on me the responsibility of Karar Ashram in Puri, his main and supreme spiritual center. If the people in the world sincerely practice Kriya Yoga as propounded by Babaji Maharaj, Lahiri Baba, Shriyukteshwarji, and Paramahansa Yogananda, certainly a spiritual world will be ushered in.

Chapter 9 – Swami Shriyukteshwarji and Karar Ashram

Although there were no trains to Puri, Shriyukteshwarji had been there many times before he established Karar Ashram there. Shriyukteshwarji was the greatest realized disciple of Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahasaya as described in *Bharatera Sadhaka* (a beautiful set of books describing the life and teachings of saints in India). Shriyukteshwarji had reached the summit of God-realization in Kriya Yoga *sadhana*. While living in the world as a householder and a businessman, he sincerely practiced Kriya Yoga. He had mastery over scriptures of different religions, astrology, astronomy, and palmistry.

On coming to Puri, he found people in this holy city to be *sattvic* (peaceful) staunch believers in God, and spiritually devotional. To a congregation of learned *pundits* (scholars), he explained vividly, how Kriya Yoga could hasten physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual development. Listening to his talk, the people became very impressed, enthusiastic, and delighted. He evinced a desire that the establishment of an ashram, a yoga teaching center such as Karar Ashram, could greatly gratify the spiritual thirst of the people of Orissa. After this occasion, he visited Puri many times.

On March 22, 1903, the vernal equinox day, Shriyukteshwarji established an ashram near the sea. On the vernal equinox, day and night are equal. The sunrise

and sunset happen at the same time in the morning and evening. This rare occasion occurs twice a year: on the vernal equinox day in March and the autumnal equinox day in September. On these days, heat and cold are felt equally.

Human beings suffering woes, unhappiness, fickleness, and vacillation in their mental level are akin to cold; and those prone to other attributes like anger, egoism, pride, conceit, and greed are akin to heat. In the Bhagavad Gita it is said, if one controls and balances the dualities of heat and cold, joy and sorrow by *sadhana*, then one attains godhood. Keeping this in mind, Shriyukteshwarji, on this vernal equinox day, arranged a spiritual meeting in the Puri Karar Ashram to pacify and quiet people's restless minds. The Bhagavad Gita says, *samatvam yoga uchyate*: "The state of equanimity is known as yoga." That means the state of balance and equanimity is the state of being united or in unity with God – the union of the soul with the Divine.

The vernal equinox day is propitious for meditating. Considering this, Shriyukteshwarji created the annual tradition on March 22 to have a *satsang* starting at 5:44 in the morning with meditation, worship, and singing devotional songs and paeans of God and ending with a *satsang* meeting at 5:44 in the evening. The sole purpose of the *satsang* meeting was to rekindle in people that God is residing in all, and to discuss how simultaneous development of body, mind, intellect, and soul takes place in human beings by the practice of the divine Kriya Yoga techniques.

The Karar Ashram in Puri, from the time of Shriyukteshwarji, became the main ashram for spreading Kriya Yoga throughout the world. Getting impetus from this place, Paramahansa Yogananda, the greatest disciple of Shriyukteshwarji, started teaching Kriya Yoga by travelling to the West. Years later, Shriyukteshwarji attained *mahasamadhi* at the ashram. His concern had been on whom the responsibility of the ashram should rest, after his *mahasamadhi*. Keeping in mind the need of also spreading Kriya Yoga in the West, he sent his great disciple Paramahansa Yogananda to the West in 1920. Although Swami Satyanandaji was to look after his ashram, his various responsibilities were keeping him busy.

My first meeting with Shriyukteshwarji took place in 1932. He initiated me into Kriya Yoga. During this time many things transpired between us. Looking at my knowledge of palmistry, astrology, scriptures of different religions, rituals, worship, and Brahmin birth, he decided to send me to live in Puri Karar Ashram. One day in 1934, when I reached his ashram in Serampore, he said with great joy and exhilaration, "I was thinking of you for so many days. Since you have come today, I am beside myself with ineffable joy." Then he again emphasized, "Studying your horoscope, I have predicted that you will be a *sannyasi* (a renunciate monk) and not a family person. You are extremely self-controlled and a staunch Brahmin. Your spiritual quest is very intense and also you have not yet married." He further said that he was now very old. From his study of astrology, he knew that his body would not live long. Puri is a sacred and holy place. He said that

I was born to a Brahmin family, my figure and complexion were highly divine and I have kept in store much spiritual wealth. It was his sole desire that I remain in charge of Puri Karar Ashram. It was his strong belief, that with the spiritual energy and power that is within me, I would be able to make the people of Orissa realize the hidden truth embodied in Kriya Yoga. He said, “A great change is going to take place all over the world, particularly in India. In the recent past the Kali Yuga (Age of Darkness) has already come to an end. At this critical juncture a kind of despondency will enter into Hinduism. People forgetting the inner truth will be busy worshipping the extrovert and outward aspects of Hinduism. Orissa is a holy land. The people here are kind-hearted, liberal, and God-oriented. So at this critical juncture of time, remaining in charge of the ashram you do all my work. This is my sincere desire.”

I entreated him, that he is the incarnation of wisdom, highly foresighted, and had attained *samadhi*. But I was not ready for such an undertaking. If this was his desire, then it will surely be fulfilled. So long as my *sadhana* had not been completed, I thought, I could not go. At that time I was twenty-seven years.

Shriyukteshwarji attained *mahasamadhi* on March 9, 1936. Until 1938, many people in and around Puri ashram saw his gross body both in the day and at night. I came to Puri in 1938 and stayed in a rented house at the seaside. Shriyukteshwarji had appeared and shown that house to my friend. In 1938, I got a direct vision of him when I was passing by the ashram. On that night he said to me in a dream, “You come and stay in the ashram.” I was acquainted with the residents of the ashram because I frequently visited to meditate in the holy place of Shriyukteshwarji. The next day I came and lived in the ashram and started my *sadhana* and meditation with more zeal and enthusiasm.

Before this, in 1935, under the direction of Shriyukteshwarji, I received the second Kriya from Paramahansa Yogananda. On knowing, that I was staying in the ashram, Paramahansa Yoganandaji was very delighted. In 1950, knowing my higher states of *sadhana* Paramahansa Yogananda installed me as *acharya* of Puri Karar Ashram, and later he bestowed on me the responsibility of spreading Kriya Yoga and permitted me to initiate others into Kriya Yoga.

Kriya Yoga is a scientific technique. By the practice of Kriya Yoga all centrifugal attributes like laziness, sexual urge, inordinate desire for food, visiting many places in the name of pilgrimage, and extrovert worship related to five elements (*panchabhutas*) are destroyed and the latent cosmic energy is awakened. The practice of Kriya Yoga subdues all these excited, negative, and centrifugal attributes.

In the yogic scriptures, it is said:

mulapadne kundalini yavat prabho

tavat kinchid na siddhyeta yantra mantra archandikam

“So long as the unmanifested spiritual energy (*kundalini*) is dormant in the root lotus in the body, all ritualistic practices, mantras, and worship will not give the required result.”

The power of God remains hidden in a secret place in the brain and spine covered by the five negative tendencies – ego, attachment, delusion, illusion, and error. If the *sushumna* path is not opened through the practice of Kriya Yoga, all kinds of worship, recitation of mantras, and counting rosary beads cannot give the result. Within a few moments of practicing Kriya Yoga, God, the Lord of this body kingdom remaining detached in the cave of the cranium, can be realized. If it is practiced in the company of and under the direction of a Self-realized master, the latent cosmic energy is awakened easily.

As the earth evolves around the sun once in a year and absorbs sufficient energy to undergo necessary transformation; similarly, spiritual consciousness equips one with required energy for spiritual change. As a result, new spiritual changes take place in human beings. The northern declination of the sun starts with vernal equinox and the southern declination with the autumnal equinox. Each declination takes six months. In the human physiology, there are six plexuses from the coccygeal (*muladhara chakra*) up to the soul center (*ajna chakra*) or the divine cave. The awakened cosmic energy ascends and descends through *sushumna* channel, which is similar to the sun’s northern and southern declination. In the human body, the soul is the sun which the latent cosmic energy moves. In Kriya Yoga, this movement of pranic energy once around the *sushumna* is equal to one year of spiritual evolution.

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Chapter 10 – Paramahansa Yogananda, My Beloved Guruji

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When in the West Swami Vivekananda said, “I have laid the foundation of spirituality, but after me a great yogi will come who will teach you how to realize God through the practice of yoga. He will sow the seed of the synthesis between Vedanta and Yoga.” His prophecy did come true. As providence desires, Paramahansa Yoganandaji descended on the earth as the supreme *sadhaka* and greatest yogi and *jagadguru*. He was a majestic person. In Yoganandaji one can find the integration of activities of Swami Vivekananda, wisdom of Acharya Shankara, and love of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He established many ashrams and hermitages in the West and East and made them self-sufficient. More than three hundred thousand people, both from the West and East, have gratified their lives by taking initiation from him. His writings and beautiful teaching have inspired the world, and continue to do so today.

Except for Swami Vivekananda, all other *sadhus* and holy men remained confined to India. But Paramahansa Yoganandaji was the first to teach Kriya Yoga

throughout the world. He did so without discrimination of caste, religion, cult, faith, or race, and tied all people with the bond of Kriya Yoga – the essence of all religions. It will not be wrong to say that he is the greatest and peerless yogi of the modern world.

The significance of Kriya Yoga is that it hastens simultaneous development of body, mind, intellect, and soul. This is the significance of Ghandiji's *sarvodaya* (total development). The father of the nation of India, Mahatma Gandhi came in contact with Paramahansa Yogananda in 1935 in Wardha Ashram and was so delighted that he took Kriya initiation from him, considering him as his spiritual guru. Realizing the significance of *sarvodaya* from the practice of Kriya Yoga, Mahatma Gandhi accepted it as the *sine qua non* of his life. The sun of India's independence rises on this momentous occasion of the great rendezvous between Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, and Paramahansa Yogananda, the supreme and greatest spiritual guru of the world.

According to Hindu scriptures, the process of human evolution to attain all-round development, perfection, and liberation requires three million years of human birth. The practice of Kriya Yoga for four hours a day is equal to five hundred years of *sadhana*. Thus, attaining liberation in this birth is possible. As an airplane enables one to cross thousands of miles within a very short time, Kriya Yoga, as a scientific technique, enables one to cross the worldly ocean and spiritual obstacles within one's lifetime. The lungs and heart become very active and energetic. It transforms the body and mind by creating millions of blood vessels within the body. The *sushumna* path is opened and a person becomes God intoxicated. Practiced under the guidance and direction of Self-realized *sadhakas*, it yields immediate and better results.

Knowing that Paramahansa Yogananda could attain *samadhi* at any time, I earnestly longed to meet him during his sojourn to Kolkata in 1935. I had been sincerely practicing Kriya Yoga after taking initiation from Shriyukteshwarji. In a large congregation Paramahansa Yogananda, pointing his finger called me. Paying my love-suffused homage at his feet, I expressed my long-cherished desire to behold his *samadhi* stage. Paramahamsaji replied, "Only by seeing, one could neither get that divine power, nor fulfil one's life's desire." I said, "I want to experience the power of spiritual practice and to learn from you the advanced techniques of higher form of Kriya Yoga." Paramahamsaji said: "How many hours could you devote for spiritual practice?" I said, "It is not a matter of hours, days, or years. In order to be in contact with such great power, I am prepared to sacrifice my whole life in spiritual practice in a hermitage, and I have taken a vow of lifelong celibacy and dedication for this purpose. I have the greatest desire to witness you in the state of *samadhi*." Being very pleased with my words, he drew me alone into a room and sat in meditation with me. Within a very short time he attained *samadhi*. I was startled at seeing his breathless and pulseless stage. His entire body was radiant with brilliant divine light. After half an hour he started to return to his normal physical condition and I prostrated at his feet. Gradually coming back to complete

normalcy, he spoke to me slowly with deep compassion and love. As I longed to learn higher techniques from him, he graciously and with a compassionate heart initiated me into a higher technique. On being asked what I should prepare and bring for initiation, he lovingly replied, “Your heartfelt love filling your palms to the brim will be enough as *guru dakshina* (donation).” Next day, giving me initiation he embraced me, and with his loving and divine touch, experience of miraculous vibration and God-intoxicated joy spread throughout my body. Putting his hand again on my head, he said, “When you awaken the *maha shakti*, the unmanifested energy that is immanent within you by your *sadhana* (spiritual exercises), you will attain godhood and the superhuman stage within a very short time.” The heart-touching and divine behaviour that Paramahansa Yoganandaji showed to me still flit through my mind, inspiring new spiritual impetus.

Most of the *sadhakas* and sages in India are recorded as having become ill before their physical departure. But Paramahansa Yoganandaji was healthy throughout his life and without any disease. He used to attain *samadhi* often while giving lectures. In the month of March 1952, Mr. B.R. Sen, the former ambassador of India to the USA arrived in the city of Los Angeles. He visited the ashram there and attended the reception at the Biltmore Hotel with Yoganandaji on March 7. Yoganandaji, as his chief guest speaker to a great congregation, spoke on India’s spiritual tradition and attainment of realization. In the summit of his speech, words did not come out of his mouth. The people assembled thought that perhaps he could be in *samadhi*, as usually happened in most of the meetings.

Then the secretary of the ashram noticed that Paramahansa Yoganandaji’s head had dropped a little, which had not happened before. Many experts declared that there was no hope for him to return to his body. This was his *mahasamadhi* (the final conscious exit of a holy person from the body).

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